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# Law Day for 5th graders in Pawnee County on April 30

**Carol A. Sisco**  
 Editor

Even though the Pawnee County Courthouse was closed for Arbor Day on Friday, April 30, 2010, the building was buzzing with activity. It was 5th Grade Law Day and students from Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer, Lewiston Consolidated, and Pawnee City Public Schools were introduced to the legal system of the United States, the process, and many different jobs needed to make the system run.

The students actually got to participate in a legal scenario and take the specific case through the system. To make the "case" seem more relevant, the incident concerned an accident at school which was witnessed by a student. The details of the accident were explained and the students were guided through the process.

Sheriff Jayme Reed had an interactive discussion with the students to describe her investigation of the accident and sending a final report to the county attorney.

County Attorney Victor Faesser explained the different elements of the reports that he would use to determine if there is enough evidence to prosecute a case and what charges to file.

Clerk Magistrate LaRita Weber told the students how she enters the information in the computer and what happens in the process leading up to a court appearance.

Then, County Court Judge Curtis Maschman assigned each of the students to a role in the courtroom - jurors, attorneys, defendant, witnesses, sheriff, and court reporter. The judge guided them through a trial, where they got to see what was required of each person.

After that was completed in the District Courtroom, the students were given a tour of the county courtroom and judge's office.

Law Day is a project of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation and

the Nebraska Supreme Court. The program is intended to encourage kids to stay in school and work hard and it also meets state social studies standards by giving students the chance to analyze skills needed for career opportunities. Law-related education is also shown to help prevent juvenile delinquency.



**Law Day visitors** - This year, Judge Curtis Maschman, seated, and Clerk Magistrate LaRita Weber, directly behind the judge's chair, were pleased to have visitors to Pawnee County 5th Grade Law Day. Standing at left is Janet Bancroft, public information officer for the Nebraska Supreme Court; next to her is Cindy Lilleoien, Nebraska State Bar Foundation consultant in law-related education; and at right is Doris Huffman, executive director of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation.



**Pawnee City 5th grade** - Pawnee City fifth graders went to the Courthouse at 8:30 a.m. for Pawnee County Law Day.



**Mrs. Hilgenfeld's class** - Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer fifth graders taught by Jolene Hilgenfeld were the 4th group.

Unattributed photos by Carol A. Sisco

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Lewiston 5th grade - Lewiston Consolidated fifth graders were the third group of the day.



photo provided

Mrs. Drake's class - Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer fifth graders taught by Shari Drake, were the second group.